

**NEWBURYPORT SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE SPECIAL BUSINESS MEETING  
Monday, March 15, 2021  
Nock Middle School, 70 Low Street, Newburyport, MA**

**Meeting Convened at 6:33 PM**

**Mayor Donna Holaday / Brian Callahan Presided**

**Present: Mayor Donna Holaday, Brian Callahan, Steve Cole, David Hochheiser, Bruce Menin, Sheila Spalding, and Sean Reardon**

**CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

**Mayor Donna Holaday** called the Business Meeting of the Newburyport School Committee to order at 6:33 PM. Roll Call found all members present. All those present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

At this point Vice-Chairman **Brian Callahan** assumed chairmanship of the Business Meeting.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Jane Snow (address unknown): The budget packet has a request to hire two Spanish teachers that was moved to the priority list. She was under the impression that two were hired last year. Is this in addition to those hired last year? If not, what happened?

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

**Warrants:**

**Motions:**

On a motion by **Steve Cole** and seconded by **Bruce Menin** it was

**VOTED:** To approve, receive and forward to the City Auditor for payment the following warrant:  
**\$1,181.16**

**Motion Passed Unanimously**

On a motion by **Steve Cole** and seconded by **Mayor Holaday** it was

**VOTED:** To approve, receive and forward to the City Auditor for payment the following warrant:  
**\$15,263.68**

**Motion Passed Unanimously**

On a motion by **Steve Cole** and seconded by **Sean Reardon** it was

**VOTED:** To approve, receive and forward to the City Auditor to make payment and deduct the funds from the school's account.  
**\$421,117.24**

**Motion Passed Unanimously**

### **Minutes:**

On a motion by **Bruce Menin** and seconded by **Sheila Spalding** it was

**VOTED:** To approve, receive and file the School Committee Business meeting minutes of Monday, February 1, 2021, as amended.

### **Motion Passed Unanimously**

On a motion by **Mayor Holaday** and seconded by **Sheila Spalding** it was

**VOTED:** To approve, receive and file the School Committee Business meeting minutes of Monday, March 1, 2021.

### **Motion Passed Unanimously**

### **NHS STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT**

- NHS Theatre presented Arsenic & Old Lace live streamed on Thursday, March 11, Friday, March 12, and Saturday, March 13. The professionalism of all involved was tremendous.
- Fall Sports II  
Volleyball tied 1-1  
Football won their first game 41-21
- Rights to the movie “Just Mercy” was purchased by the high school. A link for the movie will be available the morning of Monday, March 17 and will be available all day. A live broadcast with Anthony Ray Hinto will be live streamed during the Clipper Block on Wednesday, March 30<sup>th</sup>.
- Luke O’Brien, sophomore, created a foundation “Gear to Share”, which collects new and lightly used sports gear which is then donated to kids in need. This summer Luke collected an entire truckload of sports gear and the story was covered by Channel 5.
- Jacob Robertson was selected to be Student Athlete of the Month for February by Moynihan Lumber.

### **FY22 Budget Update**

- Superintendent Gallagher explained the four main areas of focus for the budget:
  1. Social & Emotional Health
  2. Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment
  3. Strategic Plan Initiatives
  4. Instructional Technology & Communication
- The Superintendent reviewed three new positions in the organizational chart:
  1. Director of Communication and Instructional Technology: needed to enhance technology within the system and oversee technology integrators, Technology department and will work side-by-side with the Ass’t Superintendent, as well as working with building principals for ongoing consistent communication.

2. Behavioral Health Coordinator: needed for social/emotional health of our students as we come back fully; will coordinate all of our programming Pk through high school; will be under the Director of Pupil Services.
3. 6-12 Literacy Coordinator: needed to coordinate all literacy programs for grades 6-12, much like the coordinator for Pk through 5

- **David Hochheiser** asked about the STEM Coordinator. Answer: That position was reallocated to the Director of Technology.
- Superintendent Gallagher reviewed the revenue/expenses, district-wide staffing increases, priority lists, budget work summary and supply/material reduction list. He explained there was a budget shortfall of \$1.4 million in late February; however with different revenue sources, an increased city allocation, budget work and deliberations, the shortfall has been reduced to \$393K as of March 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Bruce Menin** asked if the budget is approximately \$400K short, and if you add that to the Priority 1 list (\$210K), the overall short fall will be approximately \$610K short. Answer: Yes.

**Bruce Menin** asked the Superintendent to talk about the decision to move positions to the Priority 1 List. Answer: In trying to balance the budget, if we have to delay hiring, those are two areas that we could put on a priority 1 list.

**Sean Reardon** asked if ESSER is two-year grant, and are you anticipating using some to pay salary next year. Answer: Yes, it is 2 years. Will use a phased in approach, and use ESSER for ½ of the salary for the Behavioral Health Specialist position.

**Sean Reardon** asked what the 6-12 Coordinator position looks like, is it Humanity or is it strictly Literacy? Answer: Literacy, but will incorporate reading/writing in the district. We foresee it as coaching literacy too.

**Mayor Holaday** asked if the needs of all four schools were represented in the budget or not, based on the principal / school council presentations. Answer: Yes.

**Sheila Spalding** is concerned with reduction in supplies/materials; wants to make sure more costs are not passed on to families. Answer: We are comfortable with the cuts in the operational budget; some could be phased in using ESSER funding.

**David Hochheiser** asked if a decision had been made for school choice next year. Answer: Not yet.

#### **Special Education / In-Person Learning Update** (Nancy Koch)

- Nancy Koch explained that students at Bresnahan, Molin and Nock will be brought back to school gradually, using a phased in approach at each school beginning with high needs students identified by administration.
- Building administrators will join the SEPAC meeting on April 7th and will share their transition plans and activity for students who will be changing levels (i.e. Pk to K, or grade 3 to 4 etc.), talking about global plans for all students, and plans for special education students.

- Summer planning for the ESY programming has started. Program coordinators are gathering lists of students who are eligible for summer programming.
- The district has contracted with Ann Loftman for Landmark Outreach. Starting this Spring, she will be working with the district to further develop language-based programming.

**Sheila Spalding** asked how the first week went at the Bresnahan. Answer: Very nicely.

**Sean Reardon** asked for clarification for Nock’s return on April 12<sup>th</sup> (4 days and Wednesday remote). Is this happening? Answer : All Nock students return April 12 four days, with Wednesday remote.

**Sheila Spalding** asked for a definition of ESY. Answer: Extended School Year

**2020-2021 School Calendar Modifications** (Superintendent Sean Gallagher)

- Members reviewed the draft calendar showing nine “modified” early release days on Wednesdays (4/7, 4/14, 4/28, 5/5, 5/12, 5/19, 6/2, 6/9, and 6/16)\
- The early release originally scheduled for Good Friday (4/2/21) is moved to a “modified” early release on Friday, 5/28/21.
- Superintendent Gallagher explained the State requires elementary students to be in school 5 days in-person, full day (5 hours/day) for a total of 25 hours per week. Our plan has elementary students in for 6 hours per day (student learning time) Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, and a modified early release day on Wednesday (4 hours student learning time). Students will be given a lunch on the way out on Wednesdays. The plan will be submitted to the State.
- Modified Early Release days on Wednesdays allow more time to prep for professional development, planning, preparing for summer school programming etc.
- **Bruce Menin** asked is the State requiring 25 hours, and we are providing 28 hours? Answer: Yes.

**Brian Callahan** asked for clarification on dismissal times for Wednesdays. Answer:

- Nock/Molin: 7:45 – 11:45 (bagged lunch on way out)
- Bresnahan: 8:20 – 12:20 (bagged lunch on way out)
- High School: 8:15 – 12:15 (bagged lunch on way out)

On a motion by **Bruce Menin** and seconded by **Sean Reardon** it was

**VOTED** To accept the modified early release days on Wednesdays beginning on April 7<sup>th</sup>, and move one Wednesday early release day (May 26<sup>th</sup>) to Friday, May 28<sup>th</sup>.

Motion Passed Unanimously

**Clarification of Fundraising Policies vote on February 1<sup>st</sup>**

The second read/vote on February 1<sup>st</sup> for the fundraising policies needs to be clarified as the wrong version of the documents was used in the meeting. The correct documents are from the 1<sup>st</sup> reading done on December 21<sup>st</sup>.

On a motion by **Sheila Spalding** and seconded by **Brian Callahan** it was

**VOTED** to clarify the vote for the 2<sup>nd</sup> reading of three fundraising policies: KHA, KCD, and GBEBD.

Motion was not passed

**Bruce Menin** preferred to have individual votes on each policy.

On a motion by **Sheila Spalding** and seconded by **Brian Callahan** it was

**VOTED** To accept the 2<sup>nd</sup> reading of the Fundraising Policy (KHA).

Motion Passed Unanimously

On a motion by **Sheila Spalding** and seconded by **David Hochheiser** it was

**VOTED** To clarify and pass the 2<sup>nd</sup> reading of the Public Gifts to the Schools Policy (KCD).

**Bruce Menin** does not support this vote and would like clarification on the following areas:

1. No extensive advertising or promotion may be involved in any donation to the schools without School Committee approval.
2. Gifts that would involve changes in school plants or sites will be subject to School Committee approval. Naming or physical changes? What changes are we talking about?
3. Any gift of cash, whether or not intended by the donor for a specific purpose, will be accepted by vote of the School Committee. Every time PTO donates, or if somebody donates \$10 per month, we'll have to approve? It is not clear.

**Mayor Holaday** feels the vote should be held as the policy isn't clear, and she recommends that Policy look at this to address outstanding questions.

**David Hochheiser** stated Policy would be happy to review this, but also noted the language has been there all along.

**Sheila Spalding** stated the next Policy meeting will be March 29, 2021.

**Steve Cole** feels we should be careful around the language "*changes in school plants*" and would also like to have clarification.

**David Hochheiser** is concerned about the *changes to school plants* language and would like some examples of what that might mean.

**Steve Cole** gave an example of the solar panel array on top of the Nock building, and while it didn't involve naming, it is an example of how changes in plants occur. Changes to either facilities or plants are not always involved with gifts, and he would like clarification on those two things.

**Steve Cole** would like the Policy Committee to discuss the wording *money from groups outside of the recognized long-term organizations* as it doesn't address gifts or a dollar amount from individuals.

**David Hochheiser** suggested changing the words "*from groups ...*" to "*gifts and offers of equipment or money valued at more than \$5,000*"

**Mayor Holaday** feels \$5,000 is too high and should be lowered.

**Steve Cole** suggested putting in language that “*up to an X dollar amount the School Committee is notified, and over an amount needs School Committee approval*”.

**David Hochheiser** asked if it is possible for the Superintendent to look back to identify what sort of gifts have been received, excluding of NEF, PTO, and the Alumni Association. Answer: Yes.

On a motion by **Brian Callahan** and seconded by **Sheila Spalding** it was

**VOTED** To withdraw the motion to accept Public Gifts to the Schools Policy (KCD) for further discussion and review.

Motion Passed Unanimously

On a motion by **Sean Reardon** and seconded by **Brian Callahan** it was

**VOTED** To accept the 2<sup>nd</sup> reading of the Crowd Funding Policy (GBEBD).

Motion Passed Unanimously

### **Superintendent Update**

**Fall sports:** Parents wanted full return of all spectators. We will be phasing in spectators for outdoor sports in the safest way. We will do a few games, see how it works, then start bringing in more.

Game 1 for football went very well. Indoor volleyball home games will be senior parents first.

**David Hochheiser** asked about JV sports. Answer: Cleaning protocols between JV and Varsity home games needs to be worked out. It is a phasing-in process; anticipates underclassman will be allowed for indoor home games.

**MCAS:** State has provided more guidance. Bresnahan had a date but was changed by the State to TBD. Molin 4-5 math / grade 5 science will be up and running. Nock is on hold; State hasn't released grades 6-8 test dates. State has not changed dates for the high school. Schedule is ELA/Math to grades 10 and 11 anytime between May 3-June 4; Biology to grade 9 anytime June 1-June 11.

**Sheila Spalding** asked if we are required to participate. Answer: Yes.

**Bruce Menin** asked if the consequence for not participating is that you will not receive State money Answer: Yes, that is one of the regulations.

**Full In-Person Return:** Medical teams continue to work with building principals and are looking at all areas, such as hallways, café, and outdoor spaces. All hands are on deck with the planning process in order to phase in students return in a healthy way.

**Staff Vaccines:** Many teachers have received a vaccine and/or are getting appointments. We could have groups of teacher obtaining vaccines on the same day. Principals will be working on coverage in each building.

**Steve Cole** asked how pooled testing is going. Answer: Each week is increasing. The pilot program is ramping up and doing great.

**David Hochheiser** asked if remote students will need to come in for MCAS. Answer: Yes, principals will need to create bigger space to accommodate those students currently at home so they feel comfortable. The State has not provided much guidance yet.

### **New Business**

#### **Website**

**David Hochheiser** thanked Superintendent Gallagher for efforts getting the website up-to-date, to the point he no longer feels the need to post SC agendas and minutes on Facebook. He would like to funnel traffic to the website. He would love to direct parents to the website for all communications.

#### **MASC/MASS Support Letter**

**David Hochheiser** drafted a short letter supporting MASC/MASS in their effort to ask the State to cancel MCAS testing this year. After much discussion, Mayor Holaday read the letter aloud. All School Committee members agreed to sign the letter, which will be placed on letterhead and mailed to MASC and MASS.

#### **ADJOURNMENT:**

On a motion by **Mayor Holaday** and seconded by **David Hochheiser** it was

**VOTED** To adjourn the business meeting of the Newburyport School Committee  
at 7:58PM.

Motion Passed Unanimously